

Press “Play” on Video Advertising: *10 Keys to Success*



A Digital Marketing Depot White paper





Introduction

Advertising used to resemble a game of Monopoly—advertisers spent their dollars among many different media outlets, trying to have a presence on every area of the board. Today, the industry has dramatically shifted to a new game of Duopoly, with the majority of new advertising dollars going to two big conglomerates on the fancy side of town—Facebook and Google. Predictions of advertising revenue shows that this isn't a passing trend, but a new dynamic that will most likely continue for years to come.

Marketers must change their game plans to adapt. Video advertising is the new winning strategy, especially on YouTube and Facebook. Since your video is competing with many other forms of content, simply creating a basic video ad isn't enough. Brands must build high-quality, engaging videos (in mobile-friendly formats) that are more likely to catch the attention of their specific target audience.

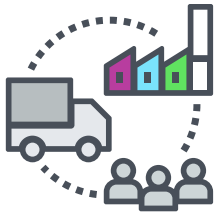
This is increasingly challenging because people constantly shift their attention, move between devices, and rarely stay focused on a specific thing for very long. Marketers must move from creating video advertisements for a passive viewing environment, such as television, to an active one where people are distracted by their devices and frequently checking social media. This requires both a change in strategy and mindset among digital advertisers today.

In this white paper, we explore **10 keys to creating successful video ads**.

Note: This white paper is based on a webinar from Digital Marketing Depot. Many thanks to the original contributors, Cory Henke, Founder and CEO, Variable Media; and Wes MacLaggan, SVP, Marketing, Marin Software.

To view the on-demand version of this webinar, please visit:

<http://www.marinsoftware.com/resources/webcasts/press-play-video-advertising-webinar>



1. Select the right distribution platform for your video.

Video is a booming category for digital advertisers. Cisco expects video will represent 80 percent of all internet traffic by 2019. Not only that—64 percent of users are more likely to buy a product online after watching a video, according to comScore. Video growth is driven by the dominance of Facebook and Google among advertisers—as Cory Henke says, video offers “the most valuable impression on the web.” There isn’t one right answer for which platform—Facebook or YouTube—to use for video distribution. The best option for you depends on your audience, goals, and the video itself.

One of the biggest distinctions is that when a user goes to Facebook they are in browse mode and don’t know what content they’re going to get—it will usually be a blend of video and other content in their feed. On the other hand, YouTube is a video-centric platform where users are demonstrating specific intent to consume video content.

Cost per view is another consideration. Facebook charges at 3-second and 10-second intervals, while **YouTube’s TrueView in-stream format doesn’t charge anything for partial views from 0 to 30 seconds.** In reality, each platform has its unique strengths and audience reach, so we recommend using both Facebook and YouTube to run effective video ad campaigns.



2. Drive an emotional reaction.

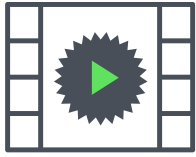
Videos that have an impact are those that evoke an emotional reaction. The last thing you want a viewer to do is watch the video, shrug, and simply move on with their life. As an advertiser, you want viewers to talk to their friends about the video, or to change a long-held opinion based on its content. Viewers need to feel something—inspired, curious, upset, or intrigued. Every element of the video, from the script to visual clues and sounds, should be chosen with the goal of connecting with viewers on an emotional level.



3. Use the power of the unexpected.

When a video presents users with a surprising outcome or perspective, they’re very likely to watch another related video and stay engaged with your brand. This results in earned views, which can be seen inside AdWords and help you determine which video to use at the top of the funnel. When you create a video that gives the user an unexpected experience, you’re giving them something to think about. Consider all the ads that made an impact on you in the past. They’re likely very outlandish—a bit more “wow” than other ads—or they showed something you weren’t expecting. Look for ways to use humor and unexpected plot twists in video instead of relying on one plot and predictable climax. You should also consider using a story with fast-moving twists and turns to hold viewers’ attention, rather than a more basic, linear story.

Thinking out of the box in this way, the DenTek brand increased the clickthrough rate (CTR) on their video ads. By testing actor, version, and product-creative variables on YouTube, they learned that the female actor had a 70 percent higher CTR, the funny version had a 55 percent higher CTR, and the actual product highlighted made a minimal difference to ad performance. This shows that the response is influenced less by the product and more by the type of storyline and who delivers the message. By using the female actor and a funny story, DenTek showed a 43 percent decrease in cost per click and a 53 percent increase in CTR.



4. Subtly brand your video.

Although engaging content that connects with your audience should be your top priority, it's also important that viewers gain knowledge about your brand through the video. Many marketers use a heavy-handed approach with branding, to the point where the branding becomes the main message of the video. This is often not the most effective approach for an active viewing environment like YouTube. Instead, advertisers should use clues such as subtle product placements

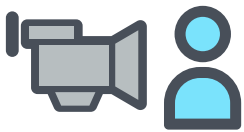
Research shows that when the opening shot is a medium-close shot with a person's face, ads can create a personal connection and be far more effective at engaging viewers.

and the brand logo at the beginning and the end of the video. All parts of the video should reflect your brand's personality and voice, connecting the viewer to you in a more meaningful way.



5. Qualify your audience.

Because every targeting option you add to YouTube video increases overall campaign spend, make sure you're reaching the right audience at the most efficient cost. By creating a video that appeals to your target audience with clues at the beginning of the video, it's likely that your audience will qualify itself or self-select. The result—lower cost and a far more targeted audience. For example, a brand targeting female shoppers may pay 1¢ per view, but this amount rises to 7¢ to reach moms of a specific income level. If you select females as your audience and open with a mom holding a baby, the target audience—females with children—are likely to be the primary viewers that continue watching after the first 30 seconds. This approach can keep costs at 1¢ per view, and gets the same result as if you'd selected more parameters (and paid a lot more for a targeted audience).



6. Choose your video shots carefully.

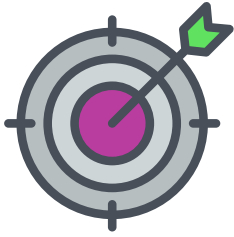
Because the majority of YouTube and Facebook video views take place on mobile, it's essential to choose shots that work well on all devices. Viewers expect videos to be built for mobile, but always want to see who's talking to them. In January 2017, the top-performing TrueView video ads opened with a medium-close shot of a speaker, and some videos stayed with this shot for the entire ad.

The popularity of mobile video apps like Snapchat and Periscope have led to an explosion in the creation and consumption of vertical video. Given the predominance of mobile views on both Facebook and YouTube, a mobile-first format like vertical video is ideal for advertisers offering **greater reach at lower cost.**



7. Use cross-channel alignment.

Because Facebook and Google dominate the digital advertising landscape, 75 percent of the time users spend online is on one of these platforms (including YouTube for Google, and Instagram or WhatsApp for Facebook). This means that as a customer moves through the sales funnel from consideration to conversion, they bounce naturally between Google and Facebook properties. You can increase engagement and conversions by advertising on both channels and presenting users with a consistent brand experience. The key is structuring your advertising programs around the users' needs and not running campaigns in silo on a specific channel. An independent digital advertising partner like Marin Software can make your cross-channel campaigns run in sync.



8. Leverage intent signals to refine the audience.

Both Facebook and Google allow you to control who sees your ads and what ads they see. Target your videos to the following audience types:

- **Core Audiences:** This type of audience is typically targeted by gender, age, or interest and refers to the basic demographic and interest-based audience traditionally used to target ads. To find this audience, use the targeting options that Facebook and Google offer.
- **Custom Audiences:** By using first-party data, you can determine a unique audience interested in your product. By uploading customer and prospect data from your CRM system to the publisher, you can target specific customers. You can also use behavioral information to segment audiences, such as people who’ve been to your website, and deeper segments based on what they actually did on your website—pages viewed, items placed in the cart, or white paper downloads.
- **Lookalike audiences:** For this type of audience, both publishers allow you to expand off your first-party data to find people who look similar to your existing customers. Because these people are more likely to convert, the cost for this level of targeting is typically higher.



9. Measure and optimize.

Every part of your video ad—brand presence, music, actors, storytelling style, creative devices—can influence the video’s number of views and overall success. By analyzing the performance of each of these parts, you can make changes to the video that will dramatically increase its effectiveness. The most important video statistic to pay attention to is your View Through Rate (VTR), because this number helps you understand how much you’re willing to pay for a specific audience. After you optimize the creative, you can increase performance even more by targeting for household income, age, demographic, location, device, and life events.

By understanding the influence that views have on the path to purchase, you can make informed budget allocation decisions and move beyond last-click attribution.

The popularity of video means that post-view conversion data is important, too. By understanding the influence that views have on the path to purchase, you can make informed budget allocation decisions and move beyond last-click attribution. Most organizations are still using cookie-based analytics tracking, which doesn’t allow you to track across devices. Additionally, publisher reporting (such as Facebook and Google) doesn’t provide insight into the influence each channel has on conversion, often leading to overcounting of conversions. With its TruePath solution, Marin is uniquely positioned to solve this attribution gap. TruePath utilizes people-based tracking mechanisms to account for both post-click and view-level conversions as your customers interact with your brand across devices.



10. Start simple.

It’s easy to assume you need an expensive and full-production level video to increase revenue, but you can often see a significant improvement by simply adding motion to a static ad. For example, *The Economist* tripled its conversion rate by turning a static ad into a simple motion graphic. While considering how to expand or get started in video, remember that you can often see impressive returns on simple changes. By starting small, you can gain video expertise and learn what works with your audience. In summary, the only real mistake you can make with video advertising is not using it at all. ■

About Marin Software

You’re fighting for customers in a digital landscape where Google and Facebook command nearly 80% of internet time and over 60% of online ad dollars. We’re on your side. Our independent platform unites advertising across search and social, connecting you to customers wherever they are. As the leading cross-channel advertising platform, we help you see better results from ad spend—every day.

For more information about Marin Software, please visit marinsoftware.com.

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